

REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 13, 2006, has been reviewed and the Examiner's comments carefully considered. Prior to this paper, claims 1-20 were pending. By this paper, Applicant cancels claim 19, and adds claims 21-23. Therefore, claims 1-18 and 20-23 are now pending.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance for at least the reasons that follow.

Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks Examiner Edwards for the indication that claims 19 and 20 contain allowable subject matter. In reliance on this indication, Applicant has incorporated the recitations of claim 19 into claim 1, and added new claims 21-23 (discussed in greater detail below).

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

In the Office Action, Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being variously unpatentable over various combinations of Claypole (U.S. Patent No. 6,318,077), Grant (U.S. Patent No. 6,272,850), Nishimura (U.S. Patent No. 6,345,499), Barroni-Bird (U.S. Patent No. 5,983,628), Nozawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,266,957), Rim (U.S. Patent No. 6,739,579), Tramontini (U.S. Patent No. 3,223,150) and Bennett (U.S. Patent No. 6,151,891).

In response, in order to advance prosecution, and without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the recitations of claim 19 (effectively placing claim 19 into independent form); claim 19 being indicated as containing allowable subject matter. As claim 20 was also indicated as containing allowable subject matter, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are now moot, as each of claims 1-18 and 20 now contains subject matter indicated as being allowable.

New Claims

New claims 21-23 have been added. New claim 21 includes the language of previously pending claims 1 and 20 (effectively placing claim 20 into independent form); claim 20 being indicated as containing allowable subject matter. New claim 22 comprises the recitations of previously pending claim 1, except for the language “by means of changing . . . a capacity of the catalytic converter,” and further includes the recitations of previously pending claim 19. New claim 23 comprises the recitations of previously pending claim 1, again except for the language “by means of changing . . . a capacity of the catalytic converter,” and further includes the recitations of previously pending claim 20. Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 21-23 are allowable for at least the same reasons that made previously pending claims 19 and 20 allowable.

Conclusion

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

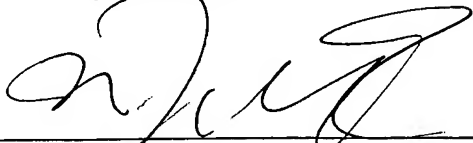
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for

such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Examiner Edwards is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

FOLEY & LARDNER LLP
Customer Number: 22428
Telephone: (202) 295-4747
Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

Martin J. Cosenza
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 48,892